

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2005

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We are writing to respectfully request that the House of Representatives address the issue of how to better secure Americans' personal financial information and minimize the growing risk of identity theft.

In addition to last week's *New York Times* article detailing the thriving Internet-based black market in consumer information, the countless data security breaches nationwide have continued to fuel ongoing concerns about the safety and security of Americans' personal financial data.


In many cases, individuals are unaware that their data has been compromised until it is too late, finding out only after a call from a credit card company or collection agency inquiring about unpaid bills. Even though victims do not usually end up paying their imposters' debts, they are often left with a damaged credit report and must spend months, if not years, regaining their financial health.


The Identity Theft Resource Center reports that there have been 62 breaches involving 53.5 million Americans this year alone. As the number of identity theft incidents continues to rise, we believe Congress must determine how business and government can work together to better ensure that the private, personal information of consumers is adequately protected.


The New Democrat Coalition has long been a leader in helping to forge such solutions. As we weigh new measures to protect Americans' personal information, we must develop a strong standard to require companies to notify customers when a substantial breach occurs that could lead to identity theft, as well as strict penalties to reign in the cyber thieves who are wreaking havoc on the financial lives of millions of Americans.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. We stand ready to work with you and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pursue a common goal of consumers, businesses and the Congress alike: to keep American's personal information safe and secure.

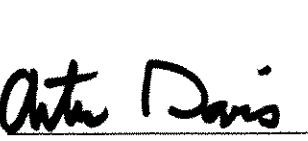
Sincerely,


Rep. Melissa Bean



Rep. Dennis Moore


Rep. Darlene Hooley



Rep. Ellen Tauscher


Rep. Artur Davis


Rep. Ron Kind


Rep. Adam Smith


Rep. Rahm Emanuel


Rep. Joseph Crowley

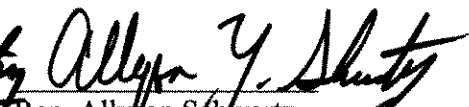

Rep. Ed Case


Rep. Adam Schiff


Rep. Eliot Engel


Rep. Jim Davis


Rep. Carolyn McCarthy


Rep. Allyson Schwartz


Rep. Brian Higgins


Rep. Bob Etheridge


Rep. Ben Chandler


Rep. David Scott